

I Will Exult in the Lord!

A Journey through the Burden of Habakkuk

4- The Righteous Will Live by His Faith- Part 2

Church October 10, 2021

Habakkuk 2:2-20

2 Then the Lord answered me and said, “Record the vision And inscribe it on tablets, That the one who reads it may run.

3 “For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay.

4 “Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.

5 “Furthermore, wine betrays the haughty man, So that he does not stay at home. He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, And he is like death, never satisfied. He also gathers to himself all nations And collects to himself all peoples.

6 “Will not all of these take up a taunt-song against him, Even mockery and insinuations against him And say, ‘Woe to him who increases what is not his — For how long— And makes himself rich with loans?’

7 “Will not your creditors rise up suddenly, And those who collect from you awaken? Indeed, you will become plunder for them.

8 “Because you have looted many nations, All the remainder of the peoples will loot you— Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, To the town and all its inhabitants.

9 “Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house To put his nest on high, To be delivered from the hand of calamity!

10 “You have devised a shameful thing for your house By cutting off many peoples; So you are sinning against yourself.

11 “Surely the stone will cry out from the wall, And the rafter will answer it from the framework.

12 “Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed And founds a town with violence!

13 “Is it not indeed from the Lord of hosts That peoples toil for fire, And nations grow weary for nothing?

14 “For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea.

15 “Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, Who mix in your venom even to make them drunk So as to look on their nakedness!

16 “You will be filled with disgrace rather than honor. Now you yourself drink and expose your own nakedness. The cup in the Lord’s right hand will come around to you, And utter disgrace will come upon your glory.

17 “For the violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, And the devastation of its beasts by which you terrified them, Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, To the town and all its inhabitants.

18 “What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it, Or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork When he fashions speechless idols.

19 “Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, ‘Awake!’ To a mute stone, ‘Arise!’ And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all inside it.

20 “But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.”

To the Glory of God

The Concept that guilty sinners can be forgiven and “made Righteous” by what they *believe in*; what they *trust in*; and what they *confess*; and NOT by what they “*do*”- is as *radical* and as *strange* a Concept as anything on this earth. It just doesn’t make any sense.

For the sons and daughters of Adam to receive a Divine Pardon from the Almighty for everything wrong they have ever done; everything wrong they are doing now; and everything wrong they will ever at any point in the future do; and to also be made as spotlessly Righteous as God Himself- SHOULD require us to do something great; or powerful; or astounding; or earthshaking, right? I mean, for us to get something that wonderful and that important and that eternal- by definition- MUST be:

1. Hard to get
2. Difficult to earn
3. Complicated to deserve

... because if it was simple or easy or available- then that Simplicity; that Ease; that Availability- would surely *devalue* the Prize of both Forgiveness and Righteousness. It would have to *lessen* it’s Worth and it would, by definition- *cheapen* it.

So, if we were to create our *own* Religion- we would begin by making Salvation really hard to obtain and hard to keep. And so, for example, we might *require* that sinners would have to serve in a Leper Colony for a number of years in order to *earn* their Forgiveness from God. Or we might *require* that everyone,

who was born with Original Sin, would have to devote their entire lives to fasting and prayer. Or we might require that they would have to partake of Communion as often as possible- and for as long as possible- in order to be *worthy* of being made Righteous. We might invent very complicated and elaborate Rituals- complete with ornate Ceremonies and maybe have the leaders of our religion wear fancy, colorful garments to be worn at certain times of the year (that have nothing to do with anything important). Or we might even encourage those who follow our Teachings to be willing to die- in whatever Cause we would determine- like “*to rid Jerusalem of the infidels*” (the Crusades); or “*to fly airplanes through buildings in a legally declared jihad*” (Islam).

But one thing for sure. We would NEVER create a Religion that would categorically teach that wicked rebels CAN'T “do” ANYTHING to earn their own Salvation. That would be ridiculous. Nothing is free. At least nothing valuable is free. There MUST be a Price; a Requirement- some form of us working hard to get this elusive Salvation, right?

I mean it's just common sense that we MUST do SOMETHING- *anything!* Because being forgiven- forever; and being “made perfectly Righteous” is just too important; too serious; and too eternal to be obtained through “Faith” alone. Surely there would be more that is required of people than merely “confessing”; and “trusting”; and “believing” in Jesus Christ- *personally*; and in His finished Work. Yea, if we wanted people to appreciate how important all of this is- we would NEVER do that.

Which is why all of the Man-made Religions and Philosophies of the world do exactly that. Every single one of them *require* their followers to “do” something to earn Salvation. So, the only real difference between Islam and Judaism and Mormonism and Seventh Day Adventism and Jehovah's Witnesses and the Roman religious System- is in the details of what they require people to do- to become worthy of Eternal Life.

But, dear friends, we really don't have to invent any of those things- because God solved this Problem. And we don't have to create our own Religion either- because God did that too. And the Religion that God Himself created is called, “*Christianity*”. It's the “*Religion of Jesus*”- Who is the “Christ” (the Anointed One/Messiah). So, “*Christianity*” then is the Religion that places Jesus at the Center of all things. And this is why the Apostle Paul was “moved” by God the Holy Spirit to write this in **Romans 11:36:**

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Paul said here that “**all things**” come FROM Jesus; and they flow THROUGH Jesus; and they eventually go back TO Jesus. So, NOTHING in Christianity comes FROM us. NOTHING in Christianity flows THROUGH us. And NOTHING in Christianity finally goes back TO us. And this is WHY Jesus gets ALL the Glory- FOREVER!

So, Salvation then is the Gift of God whereby He makes us acceptable to Himself (by what He alone does for us)- to the End that we will be able (and willing) to obtain the fullness of our own Joy- in “all things” coming from Jesus; and flowing through Jesus; and eventually going back to Jesus.

And unlike ANY of the other Religions of the world- Christianity alone teaches that no human can do ANYTHING to earn that Gift. In fact, the Bible goes so far as to teach that for anyone to even try to “do something” to earn or to deserve; or to be worthy of this wondrous Gift of Salvation- finds us actually fighting AGAINST Who Jesus is; and what Jesus has done.

In other words, Who Jesus is- is so amazing that for anyone to try to “do something” to make themselves acceptable to God- is to say that Who Jesus is- is NOT Good enough. And what Jesus alone has done is so breathtaking- that for anyone to try to add other Requirements to Salvation- is to say that what Jesus did- was NOT Good enough.

And that is the strange and odd thing about Christianity. You see, Jesus was perfectly sinless. And that means if anyone is to be saved- they MUST confess they are TOTALLY sinful. TOTALLY depraved. TOTALLY lost. TOTALLY evil. TOTALLY wicked. TOTALLY deserving of eternal Damnation. And TOTALLY unable to change our own Condition by ANYTHING that we do for ourselves.

But part of what it means to be lost and fallen- is that we are so steeped in Pride and Arrogance and Self-righteousness- that, unless God would sovereignly grant us to Gift of Humility- we don't believe this. And our natural and normal Condition is that we aren't about to admit or confess any of this.

And so, in our sinful, fallen, blind, and deceived State- we will insist that we are really NOT that bad; and we really are NOT that sinful; and we really AREN'T that lost; and surely God is NOT that angry with us; and surely we DON'T deserve eternal Damnation; and surely there is SOMETHING we can do to make ourselves acceptable in God's Sight.

And the other odd and strange part of Christianity- is that ONLY what Jesus ALONE did for us- is acceptable to God. And that means that if anyone is to be saved- they MUST confess that ALL of our Effort to become acceptable to God- is simply NOT enough. ALL of our Deeds of Nobility or Goodness is simply NOT noble or good enough. ALL of our Labor to make ourselves to be attractive to God- is simply NOT enough. ALL our Works of religious Duty or Obligation- is

simply NOT enough. And the sum total of ALL that we have done to earn or deserve Salvation has NOT brought us any closer to God than a child molester or a mass murderer.

But again- our sinful and fallen Pride and Arrogance and Self-righteousness will simply NOT allow us to believe this. Because this part of Christianity is fundamentally insulting to our Pride. And so, we will continue to insist that what we do for ourselves- in our own power and by our own volition- IS acceptable to God and that God will see what we do- and count our EFFORT as being Good enough to let us into His Presence- even though the Bible categorically says He won't.

So, we go to Heaven because of Who Jesus is and What Jesus alone has done- our we don't go at all. We can't add ANYTHING to Who Jesus is and we can't take away ANYTHING from What Jesus has done. So, Christianity ALONE teaches that lost sinners are forgiven and made Righteous- by what we "believe"; what we "trust in"; and what we "confess"- and NOT by what we "do". Everything that we are supposed to "do" (and we are supposed to do a lot) comes AFTER we have already been saved. And everything we "do" is carried out in a loving and humble Response to Who Jesus is and What Jesus alone has done. But the same Bible that teaches that- also teaches that we are NEVER to "do" ANYTHING as an Effort to earn Favor with God. We have Favor with God- based on Who Jesus is and What Jesus alone has done. So, believing and trusting and confessing that Who Jesus is and What Jesus alone has done- is what makes guilty sinners acceptable to God. And the Statement that summarizes all of that is:

Sola Fide

... which is Latin for "*by Faith Alone*". Or we could use the phrase that God used right here with the Prophet Habakkuk,

... the righteous will live by his faith.

And so, "*Evangelical Christianity*" is the "Religion of Jesus" that seeks to spread the "Good News" that Forgiveness and Righteousness is obtained through Jesus' Life, Death, and Resurrection ALONE; the "Good News" of "*Sola Fide*". So, "*Evangelical Christianity*" seeks to loudly and unmistakably and unashamedly herald the "Greatest News in all the World" that "**the Righteous will live by his Faith**" to every nation and tribe and tongue- through the foolishness of the Word preached- so that wicked sinners can be forgiven and made Righteous through Who Jesus is and What Jesus alone has done!

And because we are saved “by Faith alone” and NOT by what we “do”- it doesn’t matter how bad we have been! It doesn’t matter how black our hearts have been! It doesn’t matter how evil we have been; or how much sin we have engaged in; or how long we have dwelt in wickedness. Because Salvation is NOT earned- but granted; because Salvation is NOT deserved- but freely given; because Salvation is NOT based on our Performance- but it is based on Who Jesus is and What Jesus alone has done- then the very WORST person on earth can be forgiven and made Righteous! That is what it means to say,

... the righteous will live by his faith.

Now the situation which the Prophet Habakkuk faced was the imminent Invasion of the southern Kingdom (Judah) by the violent and merciless Chaldeans (who are the same as the Babylonians). And this Invasion eventually happened at the end of the sixth century BC, and Jerusalem finally fell to Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC.

Here in this Book- the Lord revealed to Habakkuk- *before it happened*- that Judah was going to be punished for her Sin. And that is terrible- but it wasn’t unusual. God had done that several times before. God hates Sin and God ALWAYS judges Sin. Nobody ever gets away with Sin.

But what troubled Habakkuk was the Way in which God had chosen to punish His Own people. God told Habakkuk that he was going to punish the chosen people of God- by raising up the Chaldeans- to be used as His Instrument of His righteous Judgment! And this was a bit hard to take- because the Chaldeans themselves were pagan infidels, who didn’t know God and had no concern at all for God.

So, why would God punish His chosen people by using another people- who were far *worse* than the Jews? How does that make any sense? By using the Chaldeans- God was going to allow evil men to triumph over the people He had chosen and subjugate them! Why would God do that? How does it make any sense at all for God to use an infinitely worse Evil to correct the Evil in His people? This is what perplexed Habakkuk.

Now unlike other Prophets like Joel and Zephaniah and Amos- Habakkuk does not even mention the possibility that Destruction could be averted. He does NOT call for “National Repentance” or even “Individual Repentance”. It is too late. Instead, this Prophet predicts the complete Destruction of Judah. But strangely- Habakkuk also predicts the eventual Doom of the Chaldeans too! And then he promises that the only Way for God’s people to preserve their lives- through the impending Judgment- is “by Faith”! And the way the Hebrew is constructed here tells us that the way out is “by Faith- ALONE!”

So even though Annihilation is sovereignly decreed for the Nation of Israel- there is great Hope woven all through this horrific Judgment- for individuals- who are gifted with the Ability to hold fast their Confidence in God.

Now the final and complete “*Doctrine of Justification by Faith ALONE*”, as Paul taught it in his masterpiece called, the “**Epistle to the Romans**” and also his “**Epistle to the Galatians**” has NOT been given by God the Holy Spirit yet. But the foundational Seed of this radical and amazing Truth is right here- 600 years BEFORE Jesus was born.

So, what I would like to do is focus on the main point that God spoke to Habakkuk right here in verse 4:

the righteous will live by his faith.

... and then show how this Truth connects to what God spoke to Habakkuk in verse 20:

But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him

... and to tie all of that back in with what God said in verse 14:

**For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,
As the waters cover the sea**

... and then to show how that unfolds in the New Testament as the great Gospel Truth of “Justification by Faith Alone”.

Now we need to remember that Habakkuk introduced the Words of this Book as a “Burden” which he received from God. So, what the Prophet cries out in **Habakkuk 1:2-4**- that Judah was “full of violence and had perverted Justice”- is weighty and serious and terrible. For example, verse 4:

Therefore the law is ignored And justice is never upheld. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore justice comes out perverted.

Now around 100 years earlier, the Prophet Amos had warned the northern Kingdom that Injustice would bring God’s Judgment. And in 722 BC, God raised up the nation of Assyria and they swept the ten Tribes of the northern Kingdom (Israel) completely away. Now, around 130 years later- here is the southern Kingdom of Judah- guilty of the very same Sins. And this reveals an amazing Arrogance that they refused to learn anything from the disaster of the northern Kingdom.

So, in **Habakkuk 1:5-11**, God speaks to His Prophet what He intends to do.
Verse 6:

**For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, That fierce and impetuous people
Who march throughout the earth To seize dwelling places which are not
theirs.**

... and this shows us that God is in complete Control over the nations of
the world. He swings them like a sword to chastise His people. The Chaldeans will
come against Judah as God's "Rod of Correction."

But even in the midst of all this terrible News- verse 12 expresses the Confidence
Habakkuk has that, even though He is going to judge His people- God will not
utterly destroy them.

Habakkuk 1:12

**Are You not from everlasting, O Lord, my God, my Holy One? We will not
die. You, O Lord, have appointed them to judge; And You, O Rock, have
established them to correct.**

So, somehow Habakkuk understood that God was rousing the Chaldeans
against His people- but it was not for a total Annihilation but for Correction and to
bring them to Repentance.

Then in Habakkuk 1:13–17, the Prophet shows us that he is not bewildered
that the Proud (verse 11) and Violent (verses 14&15) and Idolatrous (verse 16)
Chaldeans should themselves escape the Judgment of God. They are actually LESS
Righteous than Judah (verse 13), even if God was using them to do His righteous
Work of Correction. So, in **Habakkuk 1:17&2:1**- the Prophet lodges his Protest:

**17 Will they therefore empty their net And continually slay nations without
sparing?**

**2:1 I will stand on my guard post And station myself on the rampart; And I
will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, And how I may reply when I
am reproved.**

So, in chapter 1, Habakkuk protests first against the fact that it seems that
God doesn't care about the Violence and Injustice of his countrymen in Judah. But
then he protests against the even greater Violence and Injustice of the Chaldeans-
whom God is sending to punish Judah for their Sins. So, first, Habakkuk is
dismayed at God NOT stopping the Sins of Judah. But then the Prophet is even
MORE dismayed at the Way God has chosen to stop Judah's Sins.

Now, in Chapter 2:2&3- we read that God gave Habakkuk a Vision. Now it is possible that what God tells Habakkuk in Chapter 2 IS the Vision, but it is also possible that what God says in Chapter 2, is IN ADDITION to the Vision. We don't know.

But in either case- Habakkuk received great Assurance about what was going to happen as God says:

Habakkuk 2:4

Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.

... and this tells us that, if God would be merciful to help us overcome our natural and normal Tendency to be Proud and Arrogant and Self-righteous- and to trust God- for not only What He has and will do- but also for Who He is- we will NOT be utterly consumed in His Anger.

And this explains the many times we read this in the New Testament:

... so that no one may boast.

... which is the “flip side” to something else God says repeatedly:

[I do what I do] **for my Glory.**

So, here we see that it is JUST AS important to God for no one to be able to Boast as it is that He gets all the Glory- for *whatever* He does. And so, these two Statements are the SAME THING. So, whether we are talking about Creation; or Providence (the ongoing management of that which is already created); or Salvation; or Divine Correction- God carries out His Will- in such a Way- that:

1. God receives ALL the Glory
2. No human can Boast

So, the Future of both Judah (God's people) and the Chaldeans (God's Means of Correction) is based on the Assurance received in that Vision. And the Assurance regarding Judah is in verse 4:

Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith.

... while the Future of the Chaldeans is verses 6-19:

6 “Will not all of these take up a taunt-song against him, Even mockery and insinuations against him And say, ‘Woe to him who increases what is not his — For how long— And makes himself rich with loans?’

7 “Will not your creditors rise up suddenly, And those who collect from you awaken? Indeed, you will become plunder for them.

8 “Because you have looted many nations, All the remainder of the peoples will loot you— Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, To the town and all its inhabitants.

9 “Woe to him who gets evil gain for his house To put his nest on high, To be delivered from the hand of calamity!

10 “You have devised a shameful thing for your house By cutting off many peoples; So you are sinning against yourself.

11 “Surely the stone will cry out from the wall, And the rafter will answer it from the framework.

12 “Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed And founds a town with violence!

13 “Is it not indeed from the Lord of hosts That peoples toil for fire, And nations grow weary for nothing?

14 “For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea.

15 “Woe to you who make your neighbors drink, Who mix in your venom even to make them drunk So as to look on their nakedness!

16 “You will be filled with disgrace rather than honor. Now you yourself drink and expose your own nakedness. The cup in the Lord’s right hand will come around to you, And utter disgrace will come upon your glory.

17 “For the violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you, And the devastation of its beasts by which you terrified them, Because of human bloodshed and violence done to the land, To the town and all its inhabitants.

18 “What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it, Or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork When he fashions speechless idols.

19 “Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, ‘Awake!’ To a mute stone, ‘Arise!’ And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all inside it.

Now it is interesting that in the middle of all this terrible Promise that God is going to utterly destroy the Chaldeans- we read this in verse 14:

For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea.

Now why did God say that here? First of all, this is very similar to what God told His Prophet more than a Century *earlier*- about what things will be like in the Future in **Isaiah 11:9b**:

... For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

Now this is too close to be a coincidence. God is revealing something very important in this Statement about His Will concerning His future Plans.

300 years ago, God moved on a slight and tender man, with a high-pitched, monotone voice. And what God revealed to this man, through his Study of the Word of God thrills my own soul to this day. And Jonathan Edwards grasped this Statement by God as the Key to the Future. And so, did the Puritans. All of them. And so did the great Missionaries like William Carrey and David Brainerd and David Livingstone and Jim Eliot.

These godly men taught that the Great Commission was NOT some “add-on” to Christianity- but was CENTRAL in the Purpose and Goal of why Jesus lived and died and rose again. In **Matthew 28:18b-20**, Jesus said,

**18 ... All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**

Edwards and the rest passionately believed and taught:

- God has promised that one day, people out of every tribe and nation and tongue would worship him (**Psalm 86:9**)
- God is Sovereign and will fulfill this Promise by the Power of His Grace through Salvation (**John 10:16; 11:52**)
- God has ordained that His Church would be His ONLY Instrument in the distribution of God’s Grace to the nations- so that God may gather these people from all the nations of the earth under the Banner of Jesus Christ (**Matthew 24:13**)
- Thus, the Great Commission will be successful (**Matthew 28:18b-20**)
- This Labor by the Redeemed (Christ’s Church) is HOW God will fulfill the Promise that, “**the earth will be filled with a knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea**” (**Habakkuk 2:14**).

So, when Jesus said in **Matthew 28:18b**,

... All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

... He meant to tell us that AFTER His Resurrection but BEFORE His Ascension- God the Father had given God the Son (Jesus) ALL Authority in both Heaven and on the earth. And this means that, RIGHT NOW- Jesus is reigning supremely over EVERYTHING! In other words, Jesus is NOT going to receive Authority to rule and reign when He comes back. No, He is reigning NOW!

And as He reigns- Jesus is assuring that 100% of all those God chose for Salvation will be saved and will become part of the Church that Jesus is building (thus fulfilling the Prophecy of Habakkuk and Isaiah).

So, in the midst of Wickedness and Chaos and Calamity and seemingly ever- increasing Sin- God is faithfully and sovereignly moving to save people out of every Nation and Tribe and Tongue- so that they may delight themselves in God. And this IS the “building” of Jesus’ Church.

And yet, as lost sinners, these elected ones; these chosen ones are- at this time Enemies of God. Even though God has set His Love upon all of them to save them- they are not all saved. Some still dwell in Sin and rebels against God daily (while some haven’t even been born yet). So, in that sense- they are all “enemies of God.” So, how does God bring them? Right now- they don’t want to come. Right now they are satisfied with their Idols and their Rebellion. So, what is the Way God will bring them? What Means has God chosen to save these elected sinners? The Great Commission. So, God has chosen that believers, who have already experienced the Miracle of the New Birth:

- Go to every human on earth
- Preach the Gospel to them
- Baptize them
- Hold them accountable to obey Jesus

... which is how we define, “*Worship*”.

People out of every nation and tribe and tongue rejoicing in God that they have been saved by the Blood of the Lamb and now live their lives- joyfully- as bond-slaves of the Lord Christ- IS what “*Worship*” looks like. And God gathering ALL the races and ALL the languages and ALL the Cultures and ALL the Ethnicities together- so they may be glad in Jesus- glorifies God MORE than a single race and ethnicity (the Jew). And that tells us that “*Evangelism*” (the preaching of the Gospel to EVERY creature) exists because “*Worship*” (being glad

in God through Jesus) does NOT already exist. Another way of saying this is that “*Evangelism*” exists SO THAT “*Worship*” WILL exist.

So, I see Jesus intervening directly and personally to complete the Domination of the Gospel over the Sin of this world. Yet the Gospel will NOT overcome ALL unbelief before Jesus comes. Some will perish in a devil’s Hell. So, when the Church’s Mission is completed, Jesus will come in breathtaking Glory and Power. And He will banish all evil unbelievers from this world while He gathers His elect into His Arms.

And this will be the great Consummation of the Church’s Mission. And the entire world will be filled with people who know and praise and enjoy and fear God (**Psalm 67**).

But Jesus will NOT do ANY of this apart from His Church and the Mission Jesus gave to the Church. And this is why Evangelism should be driven by this great Hope for the worldwide Glory of the Church and of the Gospel and of God. And that makes our Hope to be the same as the Puritans- that Christ wins! The Gospel triumphs! The Great Commission will be successful! And that is why we have much to learn from them.

But by what Authority do we enter into other people’s lands and command these “enemies of God” to repent; and abandon their false Religion; and even discard the Culture of their Country; and believe on the Lord Jesus? One Authority:

... All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

So, Jesus reigns supremely- RIGHT NOW- to assure that God’s Will to gather the Nations together through Salvation will happen. And this is what the Apostle Paul meant when he said,

1Corinthians 15:25

For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

Jesus will reign until ALL of God’s enemies (the lost) will be “put under His Feet”- in one of two ways:

1. They will be saved
2. They will be damned

So, through His mysterious and many times, misunderstood Providence- God raises up and casts down; He pulls and pushes; He causes and allows- so that EVERY Account of EVERY individual will either be settled on the Cross through

Salvation; or in Hell through eternal Damnation- and there will be NO outstanding Accounts.

So, “Evangelism”- the ongoing Effort by the Church of Jesus to herald the glorious Gospel to every single human being (The Great Commission)- is the Means by which ALL of God’s enemies will be “put under His Feet”. And that is HOW the Prophecy given to Habakkuk, 2600 years ago,

“the earth will be filled with a knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14).

... will be fulfilled! It CANNOT fail!

So, what God was teaching Habakkuk- and us- is that we DON’T need to fear that a rebellious, sinful, and evil Situation; or Person; or Nation will have the last say. The earth is the Lord’s, and He reigns supremely in it. So, even though the WAY in which God operates in His Sovereignty seems mysterious to us; and is misunderstood by us- God will fill the ENTIRE Earth with His Own Glory! And THAT is guaranteed!

And this is what God meant when He said this in **Habakkuk 2:20:**

But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.

The phrase, “**the Lord is in His holy Temple**” is simply another way of saying, “*I reign!*”; which is simply another Way of saying,

... All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

And the phrase, “**Let all the earth be silent before Him**” is simply another Way of saying, “*The peoples of the world gather to defy God and His Will. And they stomp their feet. And they yell and scream. And they leap upon the altars of the false idols. And they make grand pronouncements. But satan is NOT Sovereign- God is. Men are NOT Sovereign- God is. The evil Decisions of wicked people are NOT Sovereign; Lawyers and Judges and Magistrates and Presidents and Congresses and Supreme Courts are NOT Sovereign! God ALONE is Sovereign. And His Will is to save ALL of His elect and to keep them saved- all the way to Glory. And His Will is to exert horrific Punishment on ALL, who delighted themselves in things that have been made; and things that are passing away- rather than in the Magnificence of God!*”

So, what God told Habakkuk is good for us today. Evil will NOT ultimately Triumph. God will ultimately Triumph. And even though God periodically allows Evil and uses Evil (and evil people) to accomplish His Will-

Evil will NOT ultimately Triumph. God raised up the Assyrians to destroy the northern Kingdom. But then God raised up the Chaldeans to destroy the Assyrians and to discipline the southern Kingdom. So, even though the Chaldeans were MORE fierce and MORE evil than the Assyrians- God managed their Evil- in such a Way- that the southern Kingdom was NOT totally annihilated.

But then, later on, God raised up the Persians to destroy the Chaldeans. And then God raised up the Greeks to destroy the Persians. And then God raised up the Romans to destroy the Greeks. But then God raised up Jesus- to destroy Sin.

And now the invincible Church of the risen Christ goes into every nation and every tribe and every neighborhood and every home and every soul and we herald the glorious Good News that through Faith in Who Jesus is and in What Jesus alone has done- ALL Sin can be forgiven forever! And by Faith Alone- dirty, filthy creatures of the dust can be “made” as Righteous as God Himself!

So, we should *rejoice* at Habakkuk’s Confusion! We should *celebrate* the Prophet’s bewilderment! We should marvel at the Grace of God- as He uses Evil to accomplish His perfectly pure Goals! And we should stand in awe as God moves *in* and *through* and *to* His frail and clumsy and mistake prone people- so that,

... the earth will be filled with a knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

